

Taze Barton - Followers of the Lamb

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We have the privilege of having Brother Barton with us from Salem, Oregon. Brother Barton has faithfully served the Lord in his local class as well as many other classes, and we've received the blessing in times past from his service, and so we're looking forward to another blessing from the Lord through the ministry of Brother Barty, and he's chosen as his subject for this afternoon.

Followers of the Lamb. Brother Bart, we recall it was just 10 years ago, this New Year's, that we first had the privilege of being in the Chicago area. Some of the brethren from this area had been at the west coast through the early 60s, and they had suggested, reminded, urged some of us to try to attempt this journey back this direction, and I think it was the urging of Brother Schepelbaum that we first had courage to make this attempt.

Come back to your area. Sister Helen and I appreciate the privilege of being with you and especially privileged to have the Moores with us. The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and only through his blessing, his help, are we of any value whatsoever. We are as though we are the zero and he is the one.

And then you have 10, and so with the Lord we have a little something to offer. May we remind you of the text in the 14th of Revelations?

We'll comment on several phases of this, but particularly the fourth verse as we look to the Heavenly Father for His guidance in this hour. Revelation 14:4 says, these are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whither he goeth. These are they who follow the Lamb. Followers of the Lamb.

The first verse of this chapter shows this group to be 144,000 strong. That seems like a lot of folks, doesn't it? But comparatively to the world of mankind, to all who have ever lived on the earth, and who will yet live on the earth, it is a little flock. The Living Bible renders this particular passage in the fourth verse thusly. I like this rendering.

I think it is very nicely done and very much to the point. For they are spiritually undefiled, pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been purchased from among men on the earth as a consecrated offering to God and the Lamb. That's a quotation from the Living Bible, if you would care to look it up sometime.

These, then, are followers of the Lamb, shown to be 144,000 strong. Some have placed this text at the time when all of the crowns were allocated. Some see it as the finished product, and I'm sure that this is exactly correct, the finished product, and yet I can see the other side. So we're not dogmatic either way, we like to think it does show the final picture.

Dear brethren, I think that you yourselves are shown in this picture. If so be you, make your calling and election sure. Let's see what some of the characteristics are of those who are shown in this picture and see if we can fit ourselves into this first Luke or our Lord in Luke 12:32. We won't take time to read it. You're very familiar with it says, fear not, little flock.

It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. A little flock, 144,000 compared to 30, 40, 50 billions. Whatever the total number, it will take to fill the earth known to the heavenly Father. 1st Peter 2. 9 speaks again of this group, and there's a reference, it's really a quotation from the Israelite nation in the Old Testament, where they received a promise because they were God's

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chosen people.

But this quotation by Peter is in 1 Peter 2. 9. He says, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness and into his marvelous life, as Brother Qualluck so nicely reminded us in the last hour. These promises with them always have a responsibility. You are chosen to praise him, and there is an equation.

1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 17:4 brings a further dimension to this thought of those who follow the Lamb. Revelation 17:4. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them. For he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with him are called chosen and faithful. Those words that we often use, and I'm sure that we appreciate what the connotations all are, but we'd like to look at this group under these three terms.

If we can take just a little of your time and if you don't mind a little bit of review, because this is basic information that you are familiar with and we trust that you love also. This word chosen in this 1714 is from a Greek word, and I think it's a very special word. I think it has a very special message to it. It says to select as a favorite. To select as a favorite.

So if you've been chosen of God, you're a favorite with Him. You know, the Heavenly Father loves the whole human race. He created our first parents, who in their procreation processes brought forth everyone. But he especially loves some, and others will say he may love a little less because he gives some this special privilege. Others will have the privilege of eternal life right here on the earth, which is not at all to demean this position, because this is a very noble position for any who will at any time ever be in harmony with the Heavenly Father and walking according to his principles and moral concepts.

The word chosen then is to select as a favorite you are a favorite with the Heavenly Father. If you have been chosen, we trust you have. Your presence here indicates this. The word faithful indicates trustworthy or very trustful, and so these are called chosen and faithful.

They're very trustworthy. They've been proven to the nth degree. They've been put through the wringer, if you please, and all of the badness will say, squeezed out of them until they hear they're copies of God's dear son called First Corinthians 1:27. Let's see who are not called and then let's see who are called.

This does tell us a very meaningful part of this arrangement of the Heavenly Father. First Corinthians 1:26 27 very familiar text to you. For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, while the Heavenly Father knows his own business. These who are wise after the flesh, who are mighty in mankind's sight, who are noble by birth and so on with lots of money, and they don't think much of us common folks, why they couldn't be called of the Heavenly Father, he couldn't use these. They don't need the Heavenly Father.

They're sufficient in themselves. They have all they need. They don't need this situation where there's something up here that they've never heard of, that they can't see and feel that they can't buy with their money. So those are not called the wise after the flesh and the mighty and the noble after the world of mankind. But and here's where you come in, dear brethren, if so be you of this class, God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

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God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, or to confound those who think they're mighty. It's amazing when we consider, and when anyone thinking should consider, that when they leave this earth, they go out with exactly the same thing. They came in with nothing, and yet they get to thinking themselves something because they are great accomplisners in the world of mankind, in government, in other fields that they've selected for themselves and riches and yet they will be shown to have been as nothing. Only those who are called will be the ones that eventually God will show to have been something because they had a faith. If you have a faith wherever you got this, be thankful if it came through experiences, if we'll say it's hereditary to an extent through your family and I think faith is transmitted to an extent that is as far as the personalities of parents and it comes on down and sometimes some are just more inclined this way than others.

But we can be thankful for the privilege we have of faith. This is one of the privileges or one of the necessities we'll say of those who are called. James 2:5 speaks further concerning this class that God has selected to confound the mighty. Let's see what James says concerning this group. James 2:5 Hearken My beloved brethren.

Listen my beloved brethren, consider this point. This I want to remind you of a very important fact he is telling us. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, cropping up rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom or to be heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to those that love him and we recognize who do his bidding and who become one of this hundred and forty four thousand poor in this world, but rich in faith? Hebrews 5:4:5 reminds us of a very important fact and it's something that I'm sure that many of the so called religious groups have never come to the conclusion of and that is that Jesus himself was called. Hebrews 5:4 5 and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God.

As with Aaron, so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee, and so even our Lord Jesus himself was called. He needed to be invited. He needed to be brought into this condition because the Heavenly Father had his hand on his life. We recognize this is what he came for.

It was a foregone conclusion. He would be and yet again the Scriptures are explicit that God invited His Son to come into covenant relationship with me for my bidding and for all that I will have you to do. Why then are these called these who are poor in the world's standpoint, but they are rich in faith? There are some very beautiful scriptural reasons why these are called. I think they gladden our hearts as we re remind ourselves of why the Heavenly Father placed His hand on our lives and brought us to a position where we had that privilege of covenant relationship with him.

Romans 8:28, that text that many of us find in our manna as brethren have suggested there as a reminder of God's promises. But one again, that has a beautiful message, and we know Romans 8:28. We know that all things work together. That says a lot right there, doesn't it?

All those experiences that we have, all are working together for some purpose, for good to those or to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. The Heavenly Father then isn't doing this haphazardly. He isn't just deciding, well, here's a few, and here's a few, and here's a few. He has a special purpose. It's as though it's pictured by the human body, by the apostle, as he writes that each one has a part in this body.

There's a place for a little finger, there's a place for a thumb, there's a place for a nose, physically speaking, and so as the human body represents this 144,000 group, there's a place for each one.

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The Heavenly Father, then, dear brethren, had a special purpose in inviting each one of you to this position. He had a place that only you could fill, because no two of us are the same. Each one of us are individuals with individual backgrounds, with individual experiences, with individual personalities, and he has a place for each one.

Bear in mind then, that Heavenly Father called you according to his purpose. He called you because he had a need for you, if we can use that term in the correct sense, that there is a position in that body that only you yourself.

First Peter 5:10 another very fine text concerning this matter of why these are called. I enjoy reading this one. It gladdens my heart to see how and why we are called for this particular point. 1st Peter 5. 10 but the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, he called us again.

Part of this purpose is that he should be glorified eternally, that he should have an eternal glory before the world of mankind. He will bring to naught the things that seem to be mighty by those who were as nothing in the world of mankind. They were as though they were the offscouring of the earth. But the Heavenly Father then is going to bring them to his eternal glory, because if he can take nothing and make something out of it, it is a glory to his name. You, dear brethren, have a part of this privilege.

Another reason why these are called, and this gets very, very basic and Right back to where we are familiar with the facts. All beginning in the 22nd of Genesis 16:18, that well known text that tells us of the Abrahamic covenant. Because the Heavenly Father is not just dealing with us and nobody else forever. He's only dealing with us. Now.

He has an eternal purpose, something for everyone, if we can use that term, and this is what the governments of the day try to do at particular they try to have something for everybody. Well, the Heavenly Father has something for everybody that will make this look like nothing when it's all shown to be factual to them. 22:16 18 and the heavenly Father said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord. For because thou hast done this thing and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, as the sand upon the seashore.

And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, and because thou hast obeyed my voice. Abraham had a particular position in that because he obeyed the Heavenly Father. It isn't that this couldn't have come about in another arrangement.

But Abraham, we'll say, was the man of the hour. He obeyed the Heavenly Father. The Heavenly Father had reason again, because his progenitors would come the nation of Israel, that would bring forth all these types and shadows, that would show us how the Heavenly Father deals with us and how he is going to deal with the world of mankind. So much is said in that Abrahamic covenant. But let us not forget we are only a little flock.

And the Heavenly Father also has in mind these 30, 40, 50, 60 billions of the human family that have been on the earth since Adam, and he has a blessing for them too, and this too again is a very special purpose that he has in calling you dear brethren, to be a part of this 144,000 according to the Diaglot. Ephesians 3:11 tells us that very well known fact, and it isn't worded the same in the King James, but you know what it says?

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It says that there is a plan of the ages. There is a program that God has purposed for the whole human family from the beginning of time, and it goes into the ages to come. So he does have a very special reason for this, of blessing all the families of the earth, because he has a plan to take care of this. How then are these called?

John 6:44 brings a very fine fact to our minds. Concerning this matter that we didn't recognize until we learned something of God's plan of the ages. Again, that's a very important term and I hope you won't feel it's overplayed. To me, it's a very important term, and I think we want to remember to think and realize it gets better and better and better every day. Jesus said in John 6:44, no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

Isn't that wonderful? Just realize that the God of the universe that controls all the natural things we see out in the heavens, these stars and planets and sons that are out here billions of miles away, and he keeps them all in order, and he works this earth where it brings forth to nurture the human family and develop to the point where an Adam's seed will finally fill the earth, and in this one that so mighty has put his hand, dear brethren, on your life and mine and drawn us. Because Jesus said, no man can come to me except the Father which hast sent me.

Draw him. How are these drawn? This is a most interesting story, as we believe the seventh messenger has covered it so nicely, and we're going to quote to you from the book Our Most Holy Faith. I understand this isn't in print anymore, but it's from articles by the pastor and I'm going to refer you to page 358 and 359.

You can look this up at your own leisure. Spirit begotten sons of God in their development. But it has some very fine information on this drawing. We call to mind certain scriptures which speak of a leading of God's people prior to their begetting of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of a kind of drawing that came to those who afterward became his disciples, our Lord said, no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

This drawing is not the work of the Holy Spirit of begetting which comes to those accepted of God through Christ and received as sons. On the contrary, that which the Scriptures speak of as a drawing of God, and which we have all experienced, seems to be a natural drawing along the lines of the flesh, not toward things sinful, but toward holiness, yet along the lines which belong to the natural man. For instance, when God created Adam, naturally he would love God. Naturally, he would desire to serve God. Naturally he would desire to be obedient to God and to worship him.

These desires were all natural to him because he was in a natural condition, the condition in which he was created. Pure sin has made mankind unnatural. But even after sin had entered in and had perverted the original character which God gave certain longings for, God remained in the human heart even among depraved people. They would rather be in harmony with Him. They would rather be related to Him.

They would rather have him as their protector and friend. God does not. This is interesting. God does not draw mankind by any other means than that original power which he implanted and which has not been altogether lost through the fall of the race of Adam. All mankind have degenerated from the image of God.

But the desire for worship and righteousness, for harmony with God is much stronger in some people than in others in proportion as one desires righteousness, in that proportion that is drawn toward God, feels after God if happily he might find His Creator. He is feeling after God because he

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wishes to find Him. This is the drawing we believe, that comes to every one of us. Before we gave ourselves to God in consecration, we had a desire to come to him, and that desire was something awakened in us. But it was there before it was awakened.

Then something occurred that turned our thoughts toward God. Perhaps it was some great sorrow, some calamity, which drew the heart to God, and along with it came the feeling that our grief should be taken to Him. Along with that desire probably came the thought, God will not hear me. This is a very proper conclusion. For there is no way of approach to God except through the Redeemer, who said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the life.

This, we believe, is the way in which we are drawn to the Father, whose influence is related to everything beautiful and harmonious in nature. Not until we have this desire to go back to God are we ready to be directed with a great advocate. For when we come to the advocate, he very pointedly says, I cannot receive you except on one condition. That condition, it tells us, is that we take up our cross and Follow him. Page 358 of our most holy faith.

I'm sure you'll enjoy reading that article in full. We don't have time to cover all of it, but it has some very direct information on this matter of the Father drawing us and dealing with us as sons. This, then, is how these are called. The Heavenly Father puts his hand on our lives and directs our experiences to the point where we desire to come to him because we have a faith that there is a God.

2 Thessalonians 2, 13, 14 just one more text concerning this matter of the Heavenly Father and his drawing arrangements. This is an interesting text too. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 14 but we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. Whereunto he called you by our gospel. Yes, we've been called by the good news the glad tidings that God does have a program and a plan.

Other texts concerning this and we won't take time to read them, but they're related to this calling. Philippians 3:14 if you wish to make a note of them. Hebrews 3:1 and 2 Timothy 19 these speak of the holy calling and the prize of the high calling, and so forth, so you can look these over as you have time. So we find then that many are called. Let's see what happens to this many who are called.

Let's look at Matthew 22:14, very well known text, also quoted by Luke. This says, many are called and few are chosen. Well, that's interesting. Lord, you call some, but you don't choose them. I wonder why.

Well, there are some real fine reasons why all are not chosen that are called interesting. From the Diagloth this particular passage 22:14 for there are many invited, but few selected. Interesting, isn't it? Many are invited, are called, but few are selected. The comments on this says that few prove worthy of the favor, and few make the necessary consecration.

We will see why this is as we read three or four more texts to you and as you review your experiences and your place that you see yourselves in this picture. Revelation 7:13 14 has a comment on this matter of why many are called, but few are chosen. Matthew 7:13 14 says, Enter ye in at the strait, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat. Now note this is the broad way to destruction many the whole human family because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be

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that find it. Here is a strait, or a very difficult gate to enter into that is very narrow, but it does lead to eternal life.

But there are few that find this. Again, why is this? Let's look at some more texts. Luke 14:28-30 has a comment on this matter of why these are few who find this way. Luke 14:28-30 says, for which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost whether you have sufficient to finish it, lest haply after you have laid the foundation, you are not able to finish it and all that, behold, began to mock him, saying, this man began to build and he was not able to finish.

And another thought on this or what king going to make war against another king sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with 10,000 to meet him that cometh against him with 20,000. So here is another analogy showing the necessity for considering the arrangement. Can we really enter into this, Lord? Do we really have what's necessary? And in one way or another, I think each one of us in our own experiences sat down and counted the cost, whether we could truly go on through it or not.

No, we could not see every experience. No one else can either. No, we didn't know all the difficulties of the way. No one else can see this either. But we did sign a contract that God is filling in each day of our lives as we go along.

But we counted the cost, whether we wanted to do this or not. We wanted to know whether this was something that was too much for us. I'm sure each one of us, in our experiences of witnessing and with our families and others, have found those who said, well, really, it's too much for me. It's just too much to give up. There are just too many things I have to do that I don't want to do.

And particularly after they understood, well, there's not going to be a place you're going to burn if you don't do this now. You're going to live right here on the earth among the mankind, and so, well, that's going to be good enough for me. Some have said so. They counted the cost, if they even considered this, and then they determined they didn't have enough to finish it.

14:27 and 33, the same chapter. Let's look at two more verses further reasons why many are called and few are chosen. 27th verse says, Whoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. You mean, Lord, we have to carry that cross? Yes, you have to carry that cross.

You have to bear that cross in whatever way the Heavenly Father arranges, you have to continue on this path of being his disciple at any cost and as a matter of fact, at all costs. Laying down everything you have, giving up everything you have, whether you love God more or do you love earthly things more. That's what he means by bearing our cross. 33. Likewise, whoever of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Well, that really makes a narrow strait gate to enter into, doesn't it? Laying aside all that we have, giving up everything that we ever hoped to be in the world of mankind, as if we had any desires to be mighty or president or whatever, or own some big corporation and be rich and be looked up to. All of this has to be laid aside in our stewardship. Sometimes the Heavenly Father prospers, some more than others. But again, if we keep our all on the altar and we're willing to give this up regardless of what the Heavenly Father directs, I mean, regardless of how our experiences go, we know the Heavenly Father is directing that issue, and it's important to do this.

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So we find then that the cross is hard to bear. What then is necessary to be chosen? Let's look to 11 of Matthew Matthew 11:28-30 Here are the steps that are necessary for those who come to the Heavenly Father and who walk in the footsteps of our Lord. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

So you note here that the dear Lord is inviting us to come to him if we need Him. Like the pastor said in this article, if we find our experience as such and we find that we need to come to him, and we have a desire to find him, then we are invited. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. I am meek and lowly in heart. Oh, what a wonderful Lord we have.

He stands right here in this harness with us and helps us pull the load. He's our yoke fellow, only he pulls most of the load. He's that one, remember, and we're that zero alongside, and he's the one that's carrying the load and bearing the burden. If so be we leave it with Him. Again, that doesn't mean that we sit back and fold our hands and say, lord, take me into the kingdom.

I'll just do nothing. No, we have to be out here in the harness and working, don't we? But we have one helping us. We have one pulling the load. We have one that's doing most of the work, if you can use that term.

Romans 12:1-2. Again, a further step concerning those then, who become of this 144,000 something necessary that everyone who comes to the Lord must do and must have done, and I'm sure you've done this in your lives and are daily doing it. The apostle says, I beseech you Therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. You mean, Lord, we have to be sacrificed?

Yes. The picture was there with Abraham sacrificing his son. He tied him on the altar. He was ready to slay him. He was ready to carry through this matter of the heavenly Father says, slay your son.

Here was wrought the picture of our Lord and all who would come with him. We had to be slain on the altar of sacrifice, a living sacrifice, if you please, pictured again in the tabernacle through the goats, arrangement with the bullock and so on. You are familiar with that story? And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is a good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Yes.

Not only do we present our bodies living sacrifice, but we have to be careful in that we are not conformed to the image of the world, but we are transformed to the image of God's dear son. We have to be like him, we have to walk in his footsteps, and we have to be, if you please, a follower of the lamb.

Then 1 Corinthians 1:28-30 goes just a little further on this, and let's look back at that text that we quoted or looked at earlier, a couple of verses. The base things of this world and the things which are despised God hath chosen, and things which are not to bring to naught, things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence. Here again, then, is a further step of these, showing that they too must not glory in God or before God, because no flesh can glory in his presence, and the human family that have been so great and mighty and noble, some of them, they thought, will find that they have no reason to glory in his flesh, because here these weak, ignoble ones of the earth

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have been called and have become, if you please, the associates of Jesus walking and standing on Mount Zion to bring blessings to them.

So let's look one further point, then, the third point of this. Those who are faithful, many are called, few are chosen. Called, chosen, faithful. Three things necessary for those who would stand with him on Mount Zion. We call to mind the picture of Gideon and his band.

And I think it is kind of a good illustration, and I am not trying to say that this is the correct number relationship or that this is necessarily all the picture shows. But first Gideon was called to go out and defeat the Philistines. So he chose, what was it, 32,000 to go with him the Lord says, that's too many here then maybe might represent those who were called too many. So what's going to happen?

Okay, then there was a test put upon them and 22,000 of them went home. Too much for us. Better go back. Can't do this. Another test was put on them and another group of them went home.

As a matter of fact, that original 32,000, only 300 then finally went into the battle and they defeated the Philistines, picturing Satan and all of his horde. Here's the little flock. Here was 300 out of 32,000 called chosen and faithful. Again, not to try to suggest that this is correlating the relationship of numbers here, but it again is a picture of those who become of the little flock faithful. Back to Revelation 14:4.

Let's see what more can be said here concerning these who are faithful. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. That is an interesting thought, isn't it? These were not defiled with women. Why, Lord?

Well, we had to do a whole group of things to be of this little flock that 144,000. I'll refer you to a reprint. 43 this is a very fine article of those who will be faithful, and we would like to bring a few points to your attention that is spoken of in that particular article as what is necessary to be of the called chosen and finally the faithful of the more than overcomers. These are scriptural terms, and they are suggestions of what at least some of the things we have to do to be of this group. Revelation 2:10 says we have to be faithful unto death.

Well, that doesn't seem too difficult, does it? Or does it? Well, first we had to make a consecration, but that was only the start. That was only opening the first page of the book, wasn't it? Ah, yes, and other pages of our experiences follow all the way down to the end of our course unto death, faithful in every experience that comes to us, always looking to the Heavenly Father.

That doesn't mean that we don't stumble and we don't fall. But what happens? We must get up. We must continue on this way. We must keep walking.

We must continue to be faithful all the way to the final breath of our life, faithful unto death, and what a lot this really says when we look at it in detail. Time is getting short and we won't comment on too many of these, but each of these are very fine points that have been brought to our attention in this article. Matthew 10:22 says it we must endure unto the end. What is it to endure?

Well, we've all been in difficult situations, and we'll just say in jobs, in our work, or in various phases of our lives where it was just very hard to keep going. We were just so weary or worn out or so sick. We just wanted to lay down and forget the whole thing. But we had to continue to endure in order to keep on. So here's a picture of enduring, of working against great stress and enduring all the way

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to the end of our course.

The more light we get, the more experience we get, the more the test comes. So think it not strange, dear brethren, if the fiery trial is trying you today and next week and next year in your experiences, because that is what it means if you endure to the end. You. You will endure these and still hold to the Heavenly Father's hand, and he will also hold onto your hand. First.

Timothy 6:12, and we're not taking time to read these, you can note them, but we're giving you the gist of the thought. You're to fight the good fight of faith. Oh, yes, we have to fight. I hope we're not fighting each other.

That isn't really what the thing means, but it means to fight the wiles of the adversary, doesn't it? It means to stave off the attack of the adversary. How? We have that shield of faith. We have that helmet of salvation.

We have those shoes that are prepared for the gospel of peace. We have all of those pieces of armament, and last but not least in that story, and I believe it's the fifth or sixth of Ephesians, we have prayer. Every warrior that goes out to fight according to that picture that the apostle was bringing to our attention ends his last thing before he goes out with a prayer, and so we go out and pray.

We fight the good fight with all those pieces of armor that comes from the word of God that he has given us a beautiful understanding of through an understanding and a study of the divine plan of the ages. John 15:8. Brother Qualak brought some points of this to our attention. We have to bear fruit. That's an interesting one, isn't it?

We bear much fruit. What does it mean to bear fruit? I'm not much of a gardener. I pretty well leave that to my wife. She takes care of our garden, and she knows all that sort of thing.

And I don't worry too much about it. But some of the tomato plants sometimes aren't just right, and they have to snip off a branch here, and one There and have to do these things around the roots and have to keep them watered. So this is the picture of the vine and the branches, and it says that there must be pruning.

There must be pruning, pruning, pruning. What's he saying to us? Why? In our experiences, in our personality, in our lives, we find things that should not be there. We've developed a background of experiences because there have been horse thieves.

And all of this clear back in our background, perhaps all the way back to Adam, and a lot of these things come out in our lives and we have to get rid of all of these things, and so our character has to be pruned. We have to have these things trimmed off, if you please, trim off the excess things. You.

In order to bear fruit. Goodness, faithfulness, righteousness, and all of those things that says there is no law against all of those good things that you must bear the fruit of the spirit, if you please, bear much fruit. Matthew 5 says that we have to let our light shine. Here the apostles and our Lord are bringing to our attention natural things that we are familiar with in order that we may get a spiritual lesson from them and to help us to know how to serve God more faithfully. Yes, the heavenly Father is the Father of lights.

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Our Lord Jesus is also light. In him is no darkness at all. Or in the Father, and so in us must also be light. Let our light shine.

Witness to the truth. Give forth the word. Let those who know us understand that we've been with Jesus. Let them see. Because we want to glorify God.

It's not that we want to be big shots ourselves. We want to let them know that we believe in God's plan and that this isn't a daily, I mean, a Sunday and a Wednesday thing with us, but it's a way of life. Let your light shine again. An interesting point of light, when you analyze the many facets of it. When you bring light into a room, there's no way to get any darkness in there.

You can't bring a bucket of it in and scatter some darkness out. The light dispels all darkness. It's an interesting thing to see how light works. There can be no darkness. Let your light shine.

It's as though the candle that set on a hill, it can be seen for sometimes yards or miles or a long ways away. If the light is upon a hill, and we've often seen this in our travel across the country. We were driving through the night and we'd see lights up here, and off here there's a city.

We couldn't have seen through the dark, but we saw those lights shining, and so it's an illustration. Let your light shine. Let those you associate with know that you love God and that you're doing his will and you're trying to do just like Your Lord. Hebrews 12 says, Lay aside every weight and the weights that doth so easily beset us.

Yes, there are many weights that beset us, aren't there? Many things that would tear us down, that would take us from the prize, Many things that would hold us back. Any of these things that are things that are keeping us from serving the Lord and, and from doing our duty, and as Brother Bob said this morning, we have to avail ourselves of the service, any service that comes that we can do and help our brethren, or any way that we can serve our fellow man, as long as it's done as unto the Lord.

And lay aside those weights that would tend to get us down. Oh, we're too tired tonight. Or we've got to watch that special TV program or I'll study next week. I'm just really too beat today to do it, and my mind's on my business. I just can't think of any of that stuff.

No, we have to keep doing it in spite of the fallen flesh, don't we? Lay aside every weight which doth so easily beset us. Yes, the adversary is right there to heap more weight on and more weight on and more weight on until he plows asunder. Luke 13:24 says, we have to strive to enter into that gate in order to be of that 144,000. Yes, we know about that.

Striving to enter in, it's a difficult thing, and we have to strive, strive, strive against the adversary, not against each other. We're to help each other, dear brethren. We're not to strive against each other. Ephesians 5:18 says, Be ye filled with the Spirit.

There again is that light coming into your lives. God's spirit filling your heart. God's spirit, his love, his ways animating your life, until you look as though and act just like you've been with Jesus, because it's a way of life with you, filled with God's Spirit, His Spirit of helpfulness and love and development in order to bring his blessings to the world of mankind. Revelation 14 says, we must sing a part of that new song. Yes, there has been a new song that's been brought into being back down through the ages.

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A new song that was sung by these who are telling that there is a divine plan of the ages. God has a program. Here is something that most people don't know about. But still the singing goes on. It's doing more among ourselves as we sing the song.

We sing it correctly and the notes in their proper way and we keep it all in harmony. Then the song is right. We're also to play the harp. The divine word has been called a harp. It's like it has the various strings of the divine plan that you're familiar with.

If we have those strings in harmony, there can be a beautiful music. I can't play anything with the radio or something like this, but I admire someone that can sit down at the piano and make beautiful music. They're playing those strings together. That's the illustration of those who play the harp. Now back to that text.

That these must not be defiled with women. Isn't that interesting? This is a peculiar statement, but it's clear when we understand that this has become the spirit of the world in the so called religious groups. Because this is a scriptural definition of those systems. That system, they're like women that are out to defile.

And so we're not to be defiled with the spirit of the world. I think that's what's really being said in this. Because this is the adversary's game in order to defile us if he could. With the muddy teachings of Babylon, we have this clear beautiful truths of God's word. We don't need that Babylonish message.

Psalm 45 gives a beautiful illustration of these who are of the called chosen and faithful. That one where the daughter is ushered into the king's chamber and the virgins her companions that follow her. Ah yes, because they wrought in themselves the full spirit of God. They wrought the teachings and they built a character shown in the crocheting of that robe that they're ushered in with. Because God has a plan to use these to bless all the families of the earth.

Dear brethren, do you find yourselves in this picture? Do you see where your experiences have fit into this? And where you're a part of this group of all of these things necessary to be of this 144,000. I'm sure none of us can say we are doing every one of those things. But in God's beautiful arrangements for us, he helps us to come together in these holy conclaves of fellowship and study together to help us to do those very things.

So again we remind you, please make your calling and election sure be of this call chosen and particularly faithful you are of the first two. Be of the last one. Be faithful unto death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, may he bless you this hour and through this convention and through the coming year.